

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY

USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANILA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF: CVIS, MY, RP, JA

SUBJECT: POLITICAL REFUGEES FROM PHILIPPINES

REFERENCE: TOKYO 14518; MANILA 12621; BANGKOK 17666

1. AS REPORTED IN MANILA 12621, PAMATONG AND MARTINEZ

FIRST CAME TO OUR ATTENTION THROUGH UK HICOM IN BRUNEI IN

MARCH, 1973. THEY BOTH REQUESTED ASYLUM IN US AND THAT

UK USE ITS OFFICES IN ARRANGING SUCH ASYLUM. AT THAT TIME

WE HAD SERIOUS DOUBTS ABOUT THEIR REFUGEE STATUS.

EVEN ASSUMING THEY WERE REFUGEES, WE BELIEVED THAT UK AND

BRUNEI SHOULD ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY IN THIS CASE WHERE BOTH

MEN WERE LOCATED. AS ALTERNATIVE, WE PROPOSED THAT UNHCR

OFFICE IN BANGKOK BE REQUESTED PROVIDE RESETTLEMENT ASSIS-

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TANCE. ALTHOUGH US WILLING DO ITS SHARE IN ASSISTING

REFUGEES, WE ALREADY HAD SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF FILIPINO CITIZENS IN THE US APPLYING FOR POLITICAL ASYLUM. FURTHER, THERE WAS NO LEGAL BASIS FOR ADMISSION OF FILIPINOS AS POLITICAL REFUGEES (AS OPPOSED TO CUBANS WHO ENTER UNDER SPECIAL PAROLE PROGRAM; EASTERN EUROPEANS AND CHINESE ELIGIBLE FOR ENTRY UNDER 203(A)(7) OF IMMIGRATION ACT). WE WERE ESPECIALLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE PRECEDENT WHICH MIGHT BE SET BY PROVIDING ASYLUM TO FILIPINOS IN A COUNTRY WITHIN EASY ACCESS TO THE PHILIPPINES ITSELF.

2. WE STILL HOLD TO THE ABOVE POSITION. ALTHOUGH THERE STILL REMAINS A QUESTION AS TO WHETHER PAMATONG AND MARTINEZ SHOULD BE CONSIDERED REFUGEES, IT APPEARS FROM

MANILA'S 12621 THAT SOME POSSIBILITY EXISTS THAT BOTH MIGHT FACE THREAT TO LIFE OR FREEDOM BECAUSE OF POLITICAL FACTORS EVEN THOUGH FOR ONLY SHORT PERIOD. FURTHER UNHCR IS ALREADY ATTEMPTING TO RESETTLE BOTH AND APPARENTLY HAS ACCEPTED VALIDITY THEIR CLAIM.

3. WE DISCUSSED CASE WITH INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE (IRC) NEW YORK OFFICE. THEY ARE RELUCTANT ASSUME RESETTLEMENT OF PAMATONG AND MARTINEZ IN THIRD COUNTRY AS THEIR CONTACTS WITH GOVERNMENTS OTHER THAN US RELATIVELY LIMITED. IRC REPORTS THERE IS LETTER FROM DR. T. STARK OF INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR CATHOLIC MIGRATION IN GENEVA TO UNHCR OFFICIAL YAEGER DATED SEPTEMBER 18, 1973. IN LETTER STARK EXPRESSED DESIRE BE HELPFUL IN RESETTLEMENT BUT ADDED THAT TIME WOULD BE NEEDED MAKE ARRANGEMENTS. RESETTLEMENT EFFORTS FURTHER COMPLICATED BY FACT THAT PAMATONG AND MARTINEZ WERE IN BRUNEI.

4. FOR EMBASSY TOKYO: EMBASSY SHOULD TELL PRIEST THAT USG UNABLE PLAY DIRECT ROLE IN RESETTLEMENT OF PAMATONG AND MARTINEZ, AND ADVISE HIM TO CONTACT DR. STARK AT ICMC, 65 RUE DE LAUSANNE, 1202 GENEVA. INFORM HIM THAT US WILL ALSO INFORMALLY ENCOURAGE BOTH ICMC AND UNHCR TO ASSIST.

5. FOR GENEVA: APPRECIATE YOUR CONTACTING ICMC AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SOLICIT THEIR HELP IN THIS CASE. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT UNHCR MIGHT TAKE MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN DEVELOPING A RESETTLEMENT COUNTRY RATHER THAN MERELY ASKING VOLAG ATTEMPT RELOCATE PAMAMTONG AND MARTINEZ. YOU MIGHT INFORMALLY DISCUSS OUR VIEWS ON CASE WITH UNHCR AND URGE GREATER RESETTLEMENT EFFORT ON THEIR PART. RUSH

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